

HANSARD 2 NOVEMBER 2011
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE
SCHOOLS — ELECTRONIC SPEED ZONE SIGNS

732. Dr M.D. NAHAN to the Minister for Transport:

Will the minister please outline to the house the success of the LED-light 40-kilometre-an-hour school signs program that appears to have significantly accelerated under the Liberal-National government?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:

I thank the member for Riverton for his question. He is right: the LED flashing light safety program has been one of the great successes of this government.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: It was introduced by the Labor government. It was introduced by us!

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We will talk about that in a minute, member for Midland. Every school I go to where one of these signs has been installed is grateful for the efforts of the government in funding that program. It is often interesting to reflect. Before 1997 and the Court government, there were no signs around schools to warn people of school zones. In 1997, the 40-kilometre-an-hour signage regime was introduced. Effectively, that means that in the morning from 7.30 to 9.00 and in the afternoon between 2.30 and 4.00 drivers have to travel at 40 kilometres an hour outside of schools—especially on busy roads.

Today, some 530 schools across the Perth metropolitan area have school speed zones. We have done a bit—in fact, we have done a lot—of work on existing zones, including installing new high-visibility signs and placing line markings on roads to assist people to understand that they are approaching a school. However, as the member for Riverton indicated, the biggest advance is in the introduction of the flashing electronic school zone signs. They are a very clear and precise indicator of a school.

The member for Midland is right: during seven years in government, Labor put in some of these signs. The Labor government put in some!

A member: How many?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Five!

Several members interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I counted them. Five signs were installed under seven years of Labor! By the end of this financial year we will have installed 71 at a cost of \$2.84 million. Thankfully, for the schools around Western Australia, the number of signs will increase from five under Labor's watch to 71, and it will continue to grow.

It is an issue that is topical among community representatives. I often get correspondence from members in this place about flashing signs. I thought that I would provide some updates to some of those members. For example, the member for Balcatta wrote to me on 1 August 2011 about an LED sign outside Balcatta Primary School. That will be installed this year. I was interested to note that although he has been a member of Parliament for only 22 and a half years, he wrote to me at the same time that a local community action group was organising a petition about the sign, which was to be presented in the upper house by Hon Liz Behjat. However, if that is what it takes to encourage the member for Balcatta to put pen to paper, that is good news!

Mr C.J. Barnett: Did he write to the Labor transport minister?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: I am not sure whether he wrote to the Labor transport minister. I suspect not, Premier.

However, the other good news that I should tell the member for Balcatta before I forget is that Balcatta Senior High School and West Balcatta Primary School on Amelia Street will also get signs this year.